

Message Text

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50

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAB-01 ARAE-00 DHA-02 IO-10 L-03 ORM-01

PRS-01 SCA-01 VO-03 NSC-05 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

DODE-00 INSE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 H-02 /054 W

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P R 221506Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4587

INFO GOV CZG

SOUTHCOM

AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CVIS, PQ, PN, HA

SUBJECT: REPATRIATION OF HAITIAN NATIONALS

REF: (A) PANAMA 4305; (B) PORT AU PRINCE 1794

1. DEAN WEBSTER AND RABBI REISS, ACCCOMPANIED BY
FATHER JOHN KENNEDY, SUPERIOR AND PASTOR OF ST. MARY'S
CHURCH (ROMAN CATHOLIC), AND REV. JOHN WHEATLEY, PASTOR
OF BALBOA UNION CHURCH (PROTESTANT) CALLED ON DCM
JULY 21 TO DISCUSS MATTER OF HAITIAN NATIONALS IN
CANAL ZONE AWAITING REPATRIATION. THEY REITERATED
THE CONCERNS EXPRESSED EARLIER TO PCC/CZG OFFICIALS BY
DEAN WEBSTER AND RABBI REISS (REF A) THAT HAITIANS WOULD
BE SUBJECT TO REPRISALS FROM GOH IN EVENT OF THEIR
FORCIBLE RETURN TO HAITI. THEY CONFIRMED REPORT THAT
SOME OF THE HAITIANS HAVE THREATENED TO COMMIT SUICIDE
RATHER THAN FACE RETURN. FR. KENNEDY STATED HE HAS
SPOKEN WITH PAPAL NUNCIO WHO ONCE SERVED IN HAITI AND
WHO REPORTED IT WAS QUITE POSSIBLE RETURNING HAITIANS
MIGHT SUFFER AT HANDS OF GOH AUTHORITIES. HOWEVER, THIS
GENERAL STATEMENT IS THE ONLY NEW ELEMENT ON WHICH

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CLERGYMEN HAVE BASED THEIR APPROACH TO EMBASSY. THEY

STATE THAT HAITIANS ARE UNLETTERED AND HAVE NOT BEEN OFFERED OPPORTUNITY TO CLAIM POLITICAL ASYLUM. THEY ASKED WHAT WOULD BE EFFECT OF SUCH A CLAIM.

2. DCM TOLD CLERGYMEN THAT EMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE HAS REPORTED THAT THERE IS NO INSTANCE IN PAST FEW YEARS OF ANY GOH REPRISALS IN SIMILAR CASES (REF B) AND THIS INFORMATION IMPRESSED THEM BUT DID NOT TOTALLY ALLAY THEIR FEARS. DCM SAID REQUEST FOR "POLITICAL ASYLUM" WOULD ADD ANOTHER DIMENSION TO USG CONSIDERATION OF CASE BUT THAT MERE ALLEGATION OF SUCH STATUS WAS INSUFFICIENT AND THAT IT WOULD PROBABLY HAVE TO BE SUPPORTED.

3. DCM ASSURED CLERGYMEN THAT PCC/CZG OFFICIALS WERE CAREFULLY CONSIDERING MATTER AND THAT NO PRECIPITOUS ACTION WOULD BE TAKEN. HE SAID THAT CLERGYMEN'S CONCERNs WOULD BE CONVEYED TO DEPT.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MorefiRH
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975PANAMA04404
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750252-1155
From: PANAMA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750733/aaaabdza.tel
Line Count: 81
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 PANAMA 4305, 75 PORT AU PRINCE 1794
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MorefiRH
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: WITHDRAWN <10 Jun 2003 by MorefiRH, INA>; RELEASED <12 JUN 2003 by MorefiRH>; APPROVED <12 JUN 2003 by MorefiRH>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REPATRIATION OF HAITIAN NATIONALS
TAGS: CVIS, PQ, PN, HA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006